

THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF FIJI

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The Republic of the Fiji Islands is an archipelago comprising 322 islands, of which only about 100 are inhabited. The islands, which are located in the southwestern Pacific Ocean about 3,000 kilometers (km) northeast of Sydney, Australia, consist of 18,376 square kilometers of land area. The four main islands of Fiji are, by size, Viti Levu, where the capital city of Suva is located, Vanua Levu, Taveuni, and Kandavu. The population of about 881,000 included indigenous Fijians (approximately 54%) and Indo-Fijians (40%) (U.S. Department of State, 2005§¹).

The economy was largely based on agriculture, fishing, forestry, garment manufacturing, mining, and tourism. Fiji's gross domestic product (GDP) based on purchasing power parity was about \$5.1 billion and represented a per capita income of \$5,997. The country's real GDP grew by 4.1% in 2004 (International Monetary Fund, 2005§).

Fiji's mining industry was centered on gold, which was produced only by the Sydney, Australia-based owner and operator Emperor Mines Ltd. at its Vatukoula Mine. The Vatukoula Mine, which is often referred to as the Emperor Mine, is located on Viti Levu Island approximately 380 km by road from the port city of Suva. Silver was recovered as a byproduct of gold production.

Fiji imported significant amounts of building stone, lime, and marble, although domestic deposits (some of which had small production for local use) were known. Other Fijian mineral resources include bauxite, copper, lead, mineral sands, and zinc deposits.

More-extensive coverage of the mineral industry of Fiji can be found in the 2003 U.S. Geological Survey Minerals Yearbook, volume III, Area Reports—International—Asia and the Pacific.

Internet References Cited

International Monetary Fund, 2005 (September), Fiji, World Economic Outlook Database, accessed February 15, 2006, via URL

<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2005/02/data/index.htm>.

U.S. Department of State, 2005 (September), Fiji, Background Note, accessed February 15, 2006, at URL <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1834.htm>.

Major Source of Information

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¹References that include a section mark (§) are found in the Internet References Cited section.

TABLE 1
FIJI: ESTIMATED PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES^{1, 2}

Commodity ³		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Cement, hydraulic	metric tons	95,000	95,000	100,000	100,000	100,100
Gold, mine output, Au content	kilograms	3,840	3,836 ⁴	3,731 ⁴	3,250	3,800
Silver, mine output, Ag content	do.	1,480	1,974 ⁴	1,901 ⁴	1,500	1,500

¹Estimated data are rounded to no more than three significant digits.

²Table includes data available through December 2005.

³In addition to the commodities listed, crushed and dimension stone, sand and gravel, and sand for cement manufacture are produced, but data are insufficient to make reliable estimates of quantities.

⁴Reported figure.